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REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTICES.

Medieval Spanish Allegory, by CHANDLER RATHFON POST.
Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1915. pp. xii, 331.
(Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, IV.)

It is gratifying to find that the comparative study of literature has emerged from the stage of parallel columns of imitations and reached the plane of literary criticism. Prof. Post's study of "Medieval Spanish Allegory" is primarily an attempt to draw general conclusions from the researches of a more meticulous nature which he himself and other scholars have made in this field of literary expression. In order not to weary his reader by giving these researches in "their tedious fulness", he has for the most part avoided the citation of concrete imitations, assuming that his reader is familiar with the various papers in which they have been demonstrated. This compression gives a certain bareness to his work; at times it has something of the character of a syllabus. The relegation of the references and notes to the end of the volume renders more difficult the process of tracing these previous studies for him who desires to know the sources from which his statements are derived. It is to be presumed that this feature of the work, in which it follows the earlier volumes of the series, has been determined by the desire of the editors to produce a book which in appearance might appeal to the general reader. It is questionable whether it is desirable in such work as this which is essentially scholarly, even controversial, in character.

Prof. Post has divided his work into two sections, the first synthetic, on the nature of allegory in Spain, the second analytic, in which he studies the evolution of the type from the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius to the compositions of the early sixteenth century which stand at the border of the Renaissance. The work is thorough, the style clear. The classification of the types of allegory is especially well done, although one might question whether the expression "Erotic Hell" is not a trifle futurist as a description of the group of which the *Infierno de los Enamorados* of Santillana is the first Castilian example. The proof-reading is careful and inaccuracies of statement are rare. The attribution of the *Mare Historiarum* to Guido delle Colonne (25) is a common error. Fitzmaurice-Kelly, from whom the author quotes, has correctly assigned it to Giovanni Colonna in his second edition in French (p. 103). The whole question of the relation between the work of Pérez de Guzmán

and the work of Colonna, of which there are several unpublished manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, as well as the relation of the latter to the several versions of the *Rudimentum Novitiorum* and the *Mer des Histoires*, remains to be investigated. It is hardly exact to state that the *Somme des Vices et Vertus* of the Dominican Laurent was "published" (36, 172) in 1279; written in that year at the command of the king, it was first published in a Dutch version at Delft in 1481. For the sake of convenience it would have been wiser if Prof. Post had conformed to the well-established practice of entering the names of his Spanish authors under the first of their family names in drawing up the index, and of restricting entry under the Christian name to saints and monks.

The chief interest of the work lies in the general conclusions which the author seeks to establish. Briefly stated these are as follows: the essential continuity of Spanish allegory, the constant dependence on French models, and the unimportance of Dantesque influence. Inasmuch as his theories are frankly at variance with the accepted opinions on the matter, it will be well to examine his arguments in some detail. From a study of the works of Berceo, of Juan Ruiz and three brief anonymous works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries he concludes that the first Spanish examples are in all essentials similar to those of the fifteenth century (16). Now Berceo is fundamentally a monastic; he uses the allegorical vision quite as other medieval hagiographers use it, namely, as an unctuous ornament for his pedestrian biographies. The *Vida de S. Oria*, on which Prof. Post lays especial emphasis, as containing one hundred and twenty-eight visionary stanzas out of a possible two hundred and five, is no exception to this rule; in fact it is a translation of a Latin life by the Benedictine monk Muño, of which the author might have found a summary in the *Fundaciones de los monesterios del glorioso padre San Benito*, Madrid, 1601, by Prudencio de Sandoval. The author admits that the allegorical element in the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* does not form an integral part of the composition (118). Nor does it form an integral part in the *Libro de Alexandre*, which we may class with the works of Berceo.

From his investigation of the work of Juan Ruiz, Prof. Post has derived the ingenious theory that the general plan of the *Libro de buen amor* is allegorical (141). To come to such a conclusion is to study the poem through allegorical glasses. That there are a large number of allegorical episodes is not to be denied, just as there are a large number of fables, debates, and lyrics incorporated in the work. But the ground plan and the chief interest of the poem lie in the revelation of that bizarre union of fleshly realism and mystic devotion which has always characterized Castilian literature and the Spanish race.

The shorter compositions which the author examines are the Romance de Lope de Moros, the Disputa del Alma y el Cuerpo and a later prose redaction of the same theme, the Visión de Filiberto. The first part of the Romance, often called the Aventura amorosa, is a lyric, in the *pastourelle* form. As such, its use of allegory is of quite a different nature from the use of allegory in the longer didactic poems. Throughout the book the author has tended to gloss over this difference and as a result there is a lack of the proper relief. The second part of the Romance and the other two compositions are examples of the *Debate*, all derived from Gallic prototypes. It is to be noted that the only allegorical element in these works is the brief introductory vision and that the actual disputants are concrete realities, such as the Wine and the Water of the Romance. The debates of the fifteenth century between such abstractions as Pride and Moderation or Reason and Will are consistently allegorical.

Prof. Post would see in these works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a well-established tradition of allegory and one indissolubly connected with the fifteenth century. But tradition would seem to imply something handed down, and there is absolutely no evidence of relationship between the several works of the first two centuries, and it is improbable that the authentic works of Berceo or the lesser allegorical works mentioned were known to the fifteenth century. Are we then to believe that Imperial and his followers received the inspiration for their extended allegorical compositions from the Libro de Alexandre and the poem of Juan Ruiz? This can hardly be credible in view of the nature of these works. The truth is that their only common bond is their imitation of French models; to speak allegorically, they are flowers of a perennial plant which reveal a likeness from spring to spring only because they blossom from the same stem. The author has too often contented himself with an arithmetical sort of criticism which would determine the allegorical nature of a poem by the number of stanzas therein exclusively devoted to allegory. In his eagerness to make the stream run smoothly down the centuries he has obscured the chief distinction between the works of the fifteenth century and those which preceded them. Before the Decires of Francisco Imperial, allegory was employed in Spanish only sporadically as an incident or ornament to compositions whose general plan and structure was not allegorical; Imperial established the vogue of that type of composition in which the form and framework itself is allegorical and the other material—didactic, eulogistic, or political—becomes incidental.

In his paper, Dante in Ispagna, Farinelli had already called attention to the importance of the French *dits* in the development of the allegorical school of the fifteenth century—an

expression, by the way, at which the author takes undue offence. Prof. Post has now given us a final and convincing proof of the universal tendency of the Spanish poets of the Middle Ages to seek the inspiration for their allegorical matter in their French predecessors or contemporaries. Herein he has performed a service of no small value. It has long been the custom to ascribe to the influence of Dante every vision of the fifteenth century in Spain; we are indebted to Prof. Post for a clearer conception of the relations of Spain with the rest of European literature.

There still remains the question as to what influence Dante did exert upon Francisco Imperial and his successors. Prof. Post's answer is categorical: "in those few instances in which the influence of Dante in Castile is distinguishable it is inorganic and, for all practical purposes, infinitesimal" (29). It is doubtful whether this statement will be accepted by students of Spanish literature; the author, in his attempt to shake off the fetters of traditional criticism, has gone to the other extreme. To argue that the influence of Dante upon Imperial is trifling is to lay oneself open to a suspicion of *parti pris*. We know from Imperial's own words that he had read Dante; without this statement we might be assured of the fact from his frequent verbal reminiscences of the Divine Comedy. Under these circumstances, when we find that his most important allegorical work, the *Decir a las Siete Virtudes* (Prof. Post refers to it throughout his work as the *Decir de las Siete Virtudes*), is cast in the form of a vision, in which Dante acts as his guide in revealing the meaning of the starry figures representing the Virtues, the unbiased reader will find it hard to deny the influence of Dante upon the conception as well as upon the details of the poem. The author's statement that Imperial was incapable of appreciating Dante (181) is irrelevant; Dante was never understood in the Middle Ages. As Farinelli puts it, "In tutti i tempi Dante parlerà a pochi eletti, a quelli soli, capaci, per forza d'astrazione e di studi, di rivivere nell' ambiente di idee e di affetti in cui il poeta viveva". But vaguely and from afar Imperial saw the dignity and power of the vision of the great Florentine; within the limits of his talents he strove to create in Castilian a form of allegory which would reflect this new and lofty use of the type. We must admit with the author that his mind is filled with reminiscences of French allegory. But it is to Dante that he turns as a master.

The prestige of Dante, looked upon as representative of the use of allegory as a consistent artistic form, exercised upon all the Spanish writers of the fifteenth century a greater influence than Prof. Post would be inclined to admit. He has properly laid stress upon their indebtedness to contemporary French works and to Petrarch and Boccaccio. But he has not explained

whence comes "the higher respect for allegory" (48) which is characteristic of the period. Dante, whose name was so often on their lips, may not be disregarded as a factor in the rise of this new attitude toward the treatment of allegory.

Professor Post closes his study with a chapter on the relation between allegorical art and literature. As in the field of letters, he finds that their sculptures are primarily the reflection of the French School of the Middle Ages, untouched by the dawn of the Renaissance in Italy. He brings to this phase of the work a richness of experience which is an invaluable asset of the student of the medieval art, and throughout the book he evidences a breadth of reading which breeds a confidence in the thoroughness with which he has surveyed the field. The task of tracing the sources of medieval writers is a difficult one from the very fact that manuscripts were not the property of most men of letters. Their images and fancies, when they are not actually translating a work, are a composite of a throng of reminiscences retained from their reading and from their listening which take on a new personality in this process of transformation. At best we can hope only to recreate for the present day some idea of the range of their literary interests and acquaintanceships. This task Prof. Post has performed for the allegorical poets of medieval Spain with admirable learning and skill. His study broadens our vision of the artistic and intellectual activities of that formative period which prepares the way for the Golden Age of Spain.

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The Odes of Pindar, including the Principal Fragments, with an Introduction and an English Translation, by Sir JOHN SANDYS. (Loeb Series.) London: William Heinemann; New York: The Macmillan Co. MCMXV.

Ever since I quitted the business of making translations and acquired some insight into the languages from which translations are made, nothing stirs in me so easily the feeling which according to Seneca is the last to grow old, as the question what I think of this or that translation. To this last infirmity, I have pleaded guilty more than once (e. g. A. J. P. XIII 517; XXX 353, 474); and now that the Loeb Series is in full course, life is not worth living. What is a boon to the world is a bane to the individual. What a critical examination would mean to me, what a lavish expenditure of the few remaining